

R. A. SALVATORE

FORGOTTEN REALMS



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THE LEGEND OF DRIZZT

BOOK II

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It has been ten long years since DRIZZT DO'URDEN left the city of his birth, the city of his people—THE DROW, or Dark Elves. A deadly warrior possessed of a noble heart, Drizzt sought to escape the violence and debauchery of Drow society. In the wilderness of the subterranean UNDERDARK, he thought he'd be free to live in accordance with his principles. Instead, he has found only crushing loneliness: his only companion is the mystical panther GUENHWYVAR.

Meanwhile, in the Drow city of Menzoberranzan, Drizzt's family is still at war. His mother, the evil MATRON MALICE, still believes her rogue son may be the key to victory—and has not given up hope of breaking him to her will.

Each day passes as if it were a year, and Drizzt begins to fear he is becoming just another predator of the Underdark—and he is haunted by the memory of ZAKNAFEIN, his lost mentor...

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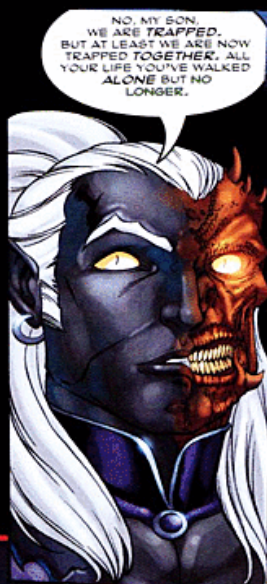


WE COULD
LEAVE.

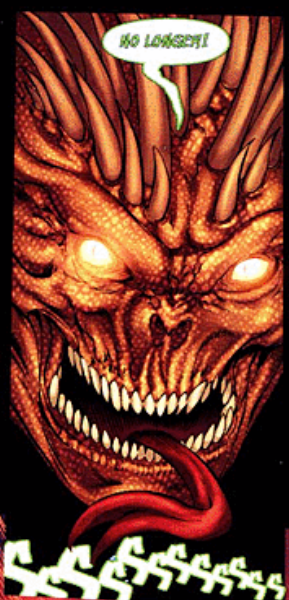
AND GO
WHERE?

THE UNDERDARK?
NO ONE, NOT EVEN A
WEAPONS-MASTER WOULD
LIVE LONG OUT IN THE
CAVERNS.

THE SURFACE?
TO FACE THE PAINFUL
INFERNO EVERY
DAY?



NO, MY SON,
WE ARE TRAPPED.
BUT AT LEAST WE ARE NOW
TRAPPED TOGETHER. ALL
YOUR LIFE YOU'VE WALKED
ALONE BUT NO
LONGER.



NO LONGER!




Guenthyvar's roar jarred
Drizzt awake, breaking the
hypnotic dream-trance brought
on by the basilisk's gaze.

RRRRRAWR




He was not with
Zaknafein, not in the
treacherous confines
of the great drow city of
Menzoberranzan.

No, Drizzt
was in a far more
dangerous place.




Ten years?
Had it really been
that long?




Yet Drizzt's memories
of his previous life, fractured
though they were, remained.

He remembered killing
Masoj Hun'ett and Alton
De'Vir, then vowing to never
spill drow blood again.



He remembered discovering
that Matron Malice had
murdered Zaknafein, his
father and only friend.

A sacrifice to
the dark elves' vile
goddess Lolth, the
Spider Queen.



He remembered forsaking
his family and leaving
Menzoberranzan, with the
magical panther Guenhwyvar
at his side.



And after that, there was... nothing, just darkness and fear.



Over time, Drizzt had come to know the dangers of the fished Underdark.



To become a predator, rather than prey.

He had escaped the cursed bonds of his people as Zak never could.



Yet more and more there were days--weeks when, almost driven mad by isolation, he was not Drizzt Do'Urden at all.

In these terrifying times, he was little more than a primeval hunter... stalking, killing, surviving.



But perhaps, Drizzt thought, survival is not enough.

MENZOBERKANZAN,
CITY OF THE DROW...

IT SHOULD
BE FINISHED
BY NOW.

PATIENCE,
MY DAUGHTER.
JARLAFLE IS A
CAREFUL ONE.

THEY SERVE US.
WELL, BRIZA, WITHOUT
BREGAN D'AERTHE, WE
COULD NOT TAKE ACTION
AGAINST OUR
ENEMIES.

USING
THEM ALLOWS
US TO WAGE WAR
AGAINST HOUSE
HUNNETT WITHOUT
IMPLICATING OUR
HOUSE AS THE
PERPETRATOR.

WE SHOULD
HAVE ATTACKED
THEM OPENLY TEN
YEARS AGO. ON THE
NIGHT ZAKNAFEN
WAS SACRIFICED!

DO YOU FORGET HOW
THE ACTIONS OF YOUR YOUNGER
BROTHER STOLE LOTHS FAVOR
FROM US THAT NIGHT?

NO, NOR DO
I FORGET THAT WHEN
HE KILLED TWO OF THEIR
WIZARDS, DRIST TOOK THE
SPIDER QUEEN'S FAVOR
FROM HOUSE HUNNETT
AS WELL!

AND BECAUSE
NEITHER YOU NOR
MATRON SINAFAY
WILL ATTACK WITHOUT
THE GODDESS'S
BLESSING...

...WE HAVE SPENT
A DECADE DOING
NOTHING, SAVE EMPTY
OUR COFFERS TO ENRICH
A BAND OF LAWLESS
MERCENARIES!

GREETINGS,
MATRON
MOTHER.











THEY'RE GONE!
HOUSE HUNETT'S
SOLDIERS HAVE
RETRACTED!

AS I KNEW
THEY WOULD,
VIENA.



A LESSON
SOME OF US
SORELY NEEDED
TO LEARN.

BUT TAKE
HEART, MY
DAUGHTERS.
HOUSE HUNETT'S
ATTACK HAS
FAILED AND NOW
THEY WILL FACE
THE WEATH OF
THE RULING
COUNCIL.

ONCE AGAIN,
DO'URDEN IS
VICTORIOUS!

WHAT
TREACHERY
IS THIS!

The next morning, Malice received the summons from Matron Baenre—head of Menzoberranzan's most powerful house—with glee.

Malice knew what was coming, and only hoped she'd be allowed to watch her rival Matron Sefafay die a particularly horrible death.



YOU DO NOT
BELONG IN THIS PLACE,
SINAFAY!

IT WAS HOUSE
HUNETT THAT ATTACKED
MY FAMILY IN THE LAST NIGHT!
I HAVE MANY WITNESSES
TO THE FACT, THERE CAN
BE NO DOUBT!

NONE, I ACTED
AS THE SPIDER QUEEN
DEMANDED OF ME.



IF LOTH
APPROVED
OF YOUR METHODS,
YOU WOULD HAVE
WON THE
DAY.

NOT
SO.

MATRON BAENRE, I CLAIM THE
RIGHT OF ACCUSATION AGAINST
HOUSE HUNETT!

GRANTED, AS
YOU HAVE SAID,
AND AS SINAFAY
AGREED, THERE
CAN BE NO
DOUBT.

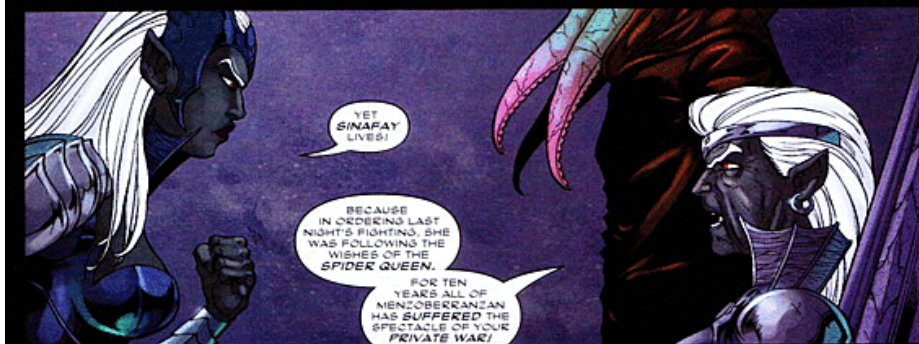


THEN SHE SHOULD NOT BE HERE!

BY THE LAWS OF MENZOBERKANZAN ANY HOUSE THAT MAKES AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACK AGAINST ANOTHER HOUSE IS TO BE DESTROYED BY ORDER OF THE RULING COUNCIL!

IT IS ALREADY DONE.

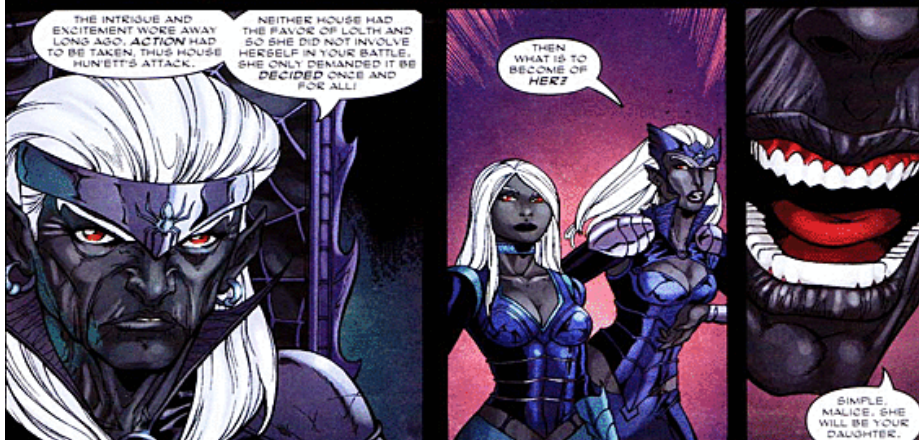
ACCORDING TO OUR LAWS THE NOBLES OF HOUSE HUNETT HAVE BEEN SLAUGHTERED. IT WAS, AFTER ALL, THE CIVILIZED THING TO DO.



YET SINAFAY LIVES!

BECAUSE IN ORDERING LAST NIGHT'S FIGHTING, SHE WAS FOLLOWING THE WISHES OF THE SPIDER QUEEN.

FOR TEN YEARS ALL OF MENZOBERKANZAN HAS SUFFERED THE SPECTACLE OF YOUR PRIVATE WAR!



THE INTRIGUE AND EXCITEMENT WORE AWAY LONG AGO. ACTION HAD TO BE TAKEN, THUS HOUSE HUNETT'S ATTACK.

NEITHER HOUSE HAD THE FAVOR OF LOLTH AND SO SHE DID NOT INVOLVE HERSELF IN YOUR BATTLE. SHE ONLY DEMANDS IT BE DECIDED ONCE AND FOR ALL!

THEN WHAT IS TO BECOME OF HER?

SIMPLE. MALICE. SHE WILL BE YOUR DAUGHTER.



WHAT?!

YOUR ELDEST DAUGHTER, RETURNED FROM TRAVELS TO CHED NASAD OR SOME OTHER CITY OF OUR KIN.

MANY YEARS AGO, LOLTH MADE IT CLEAR HER DESIRES THAT YOU SIT UPON THE RULING COUNCIL, MALICE. AND NOW, WITH HUNETT GONE AND DO'URDEN THE EIGHTH HOUSE OF MENDOBERKAZAN, IT SHALL BE SO.

BUT UNDERSTAND YOUR DILEMMA! YOU HAVE LOST MORE THAN HALF YOUR TROOPS, AND IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT YOU STILL DO NOT HAVE THE FAVOR OF THE SPIDER QUEEN.

HOW LONG DO YOU THINK IT WILL BE UNTIL SOME LOWER HOUSE MOVES AGAINST YOU?



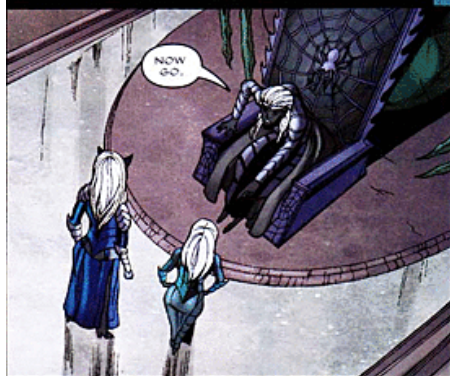
SO I GIVE YOU SINAFAY HUNETT... REBORN AS SHINAYNE DO'URDEN... A NEW HIGH PRIESTESS, AND THE FIFTY REMAINING SOLDIERS OF HOUSE HUNETT TO AID YOUR CAUSE.



I HAVE HONORED LOLTH'S WISHES, MALICE. YOU HAVE YOUR SEAT ON THE RULING COUNCIL.

BUT IF YOU WISH TO KEEP IT, YOU WILL GIVE THE SPIDER QUEEN WHAT SHE SO DESIRES.

YOU WILL FIND YOUR WAYWARD SON, AND YOU WILL TEAR OUT HIS HEART!



NOW GO.



COME MOTHER, I AM ANXIOUS TO GET HOME.

Drizzt's home for the last three years had been the lower level of a small cavern blessed with a stream full of fish, and a herd of Rothe which provided him a steady food supply.

Such a place was a veritable oasis in the wilds of the Underdark, and Drizzt had fought hard to protect it on numerous occasions.

Though it was not his alone.



For on the upper level lived a clan of Myconids, mute fungus-men who tended their grove of mushrooms and made it a point to ignore the dark elf living just below them.



A courtesy Drizzt returned in kind.

Yet even in this relative tranquility, Drizzt could seldom find peace.



He summoned Guenhwyvar as often as possible, and in her presence Drizzt almost felt normal.



But being in the material plane sapped the panther's strength, and after a few hours she was forced to return to her astral home and rest.

Leaving Drizzt all alone.



It was in these lonely times, surrounded by nothing but darkness and silence, that Drizzt Do'Urden faded away and the hunter emerged.

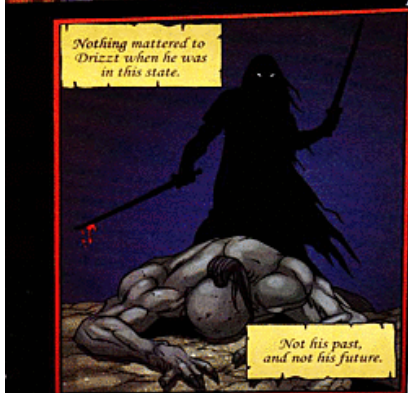


The hunter was a primal creature driven by instinct and rage.



...none could defeat the hunter.

And in the Underdark, where only the strongest survived...



Nothing mattered to Drizzt when he was in this state.

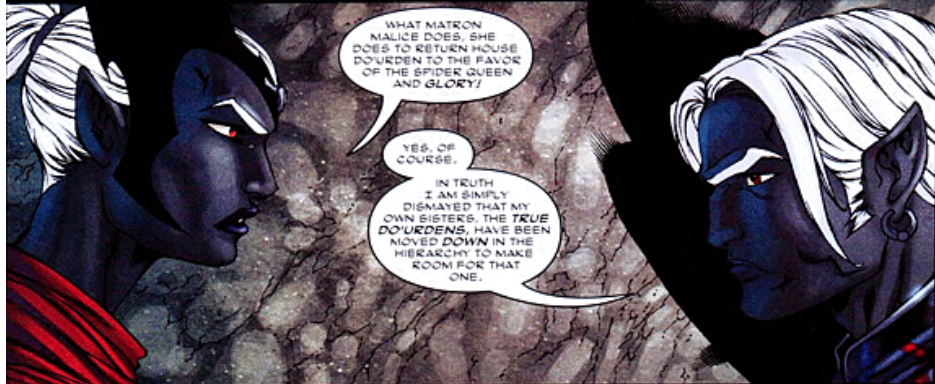
Not his past, and not his future.



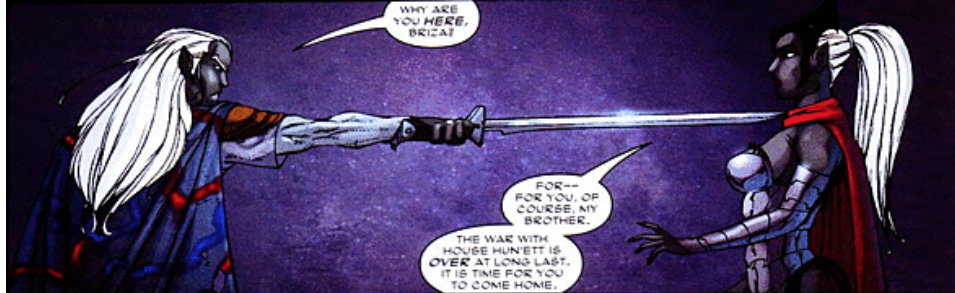
Day and night were one, and all the days were one, in the life of the hunter.

And so did time pass...









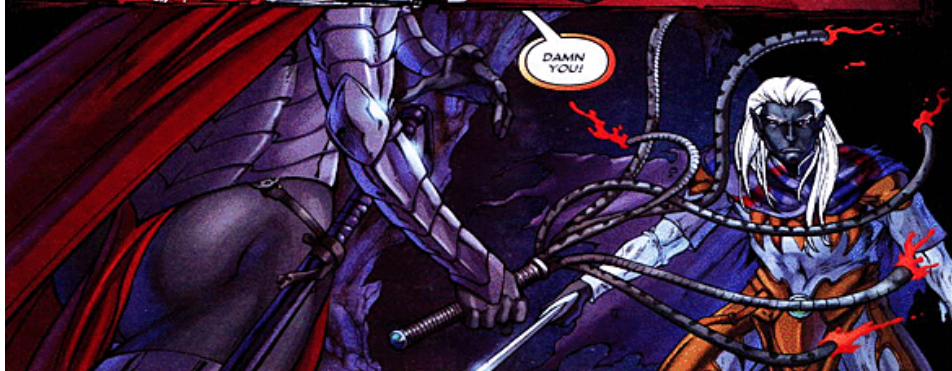


SURRENDER!

The six viper heads of Briza's snake whip whirled and twisted, searching for the best angles of attack.

They moved so fast and with such precision that Drizzt had no hope of parrying them all.

But the hunter would not be defeated.



DAMN YOU!





*Restlessness
marked Drizzt's
next days.*

*He kept on the
move, not daring to return
to the sanctuary of his
small cavern home.*

*Matron Malice was still
hunting him, of that Drizzt
was sure.*

*She would
never give up.*

*Yet he did not
fear his mother.*

*Out here in the wilds of
the Underdark, Drizzt could
fight or hide from whatever
nemesis she sent after him.*

*But still, alone
in the darkness, he
was afraid.*

*He knew that there was
a battle raging within his
very soul—a battle Drizzt
Do'Urden was losing.*

*And no matter how
far or fast he ran, he could
not hide from himself.*

They were Svirfnebli, deep gnomes.

Once, long ago, Drizzt had led a Drow patrol against one of their mining expeditions. And when the battle was over, only their leader remained.

Drizzt begged his fellow dark elves not to kill the creature, and they had agreed.

Instead, they took his hands.

Such is what passes for Drow mercy.

Drizzt followed them for days, staying just out of sight.

The hunter whispered in the back of his mind, warning him of the danger, but Drizzt did not care.


Then, suddenly, the journey ended.

The deep gnomes' voices—their laughter—was like a sweet music; one he had forgotten but now, having heard it again, could not live without.

The Svirfnebli had arrived home to Blingdenstone, their fortress-like city.


And Drizzt knew what he had to do.






Drizzt knew they would most likely kill him.

Drow elves were the deep gnomes' most hated enemies. They would be right to attack him on sight.



Yet the idea of that did not frighten Drizzt—at least not as much as what waited for him back in the horrible isolation of the Underdark.



And so he kept walking, and hoped for the best.

HOUSE DO'URDEN...

YOU HAVE
FAILED ME,
BEIZA!

EVEN WITH DININ
AND SIX TRAINED DROW
WARRIORS YOU COULD
NOT BRING DRIZZT
BACK!

I WILL
CAPTURE
HIM, MATRON
NOTHER.

HAI!

HE WOULD CUT YOU
DOWN IN AN INSTANT,
MAYA. AS HE WOULD
ANY OF US.

IT IS
TRUE MATRON.
SINCE HE LEFT
MENZOBERKANZAN,
DRIZZT'S SKILLS
HAVE INCREASED
TENFOLD.

YOU'RE
AFRAID?

I KNOW
THAT IF I MEET
HIM AGAIN IN THE
TUNNELS, I WILL NOT
SURVIVE, AND THAT
WILL ONLY SERVE TO
WEAKEN HOUSE
DO'URDEN
FURTHER.

AND YOU
BEIZA, YOU HAVE
THE FAVOR OF
LOLTH!

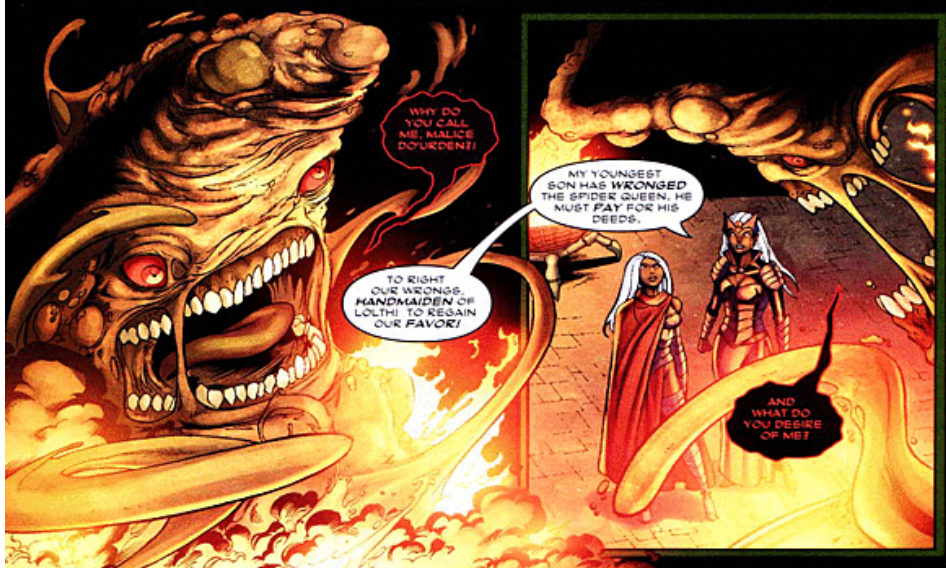
BUT DRIZZT
IS BEYOND LOLTH
NOW. THE WILDS OF
THE UNDERDARK ARE
HIS DOMAIN. WE
CANNOT CATCH HIM
OUT THERE.

JARLAXLE AND
HIS BAND, NIGHT
THEY--?

NOT FOR
ANY PRICE.
I HAVE
ASKED.

SO
ARE YOU--
WE TO JUST
GIVE UP?

NO.
THERE IS
ANOTHER
WAY.





YOU, WHO HAVE
NOT PLEASED LOTH,
DARE ASK FOR OUR
HIGHEST HONORS?

LET DRICHT LEARN
THE FOLLY OF HIS WAYS AND
THE POWER OF THE ENEMIES
HE HAS MADE!

LET MY SON
WITNESS THE TERRIBLE
GLORY OF LOTH REVEALED,
SO THAT HE WILL FALL TO
HIS KNEES AND BE
FORGIVENESS!

ONLY
THEN SHALL
THE SPIRIT-WRAITH
DRIVE A SWORD INTO
HIS HEART!



SO ZAKNAFEIN,
THE WEAPONS MASTER YOU
GAVE TO THE SPIDER QUEEN,
MIGHT RISE AND CORRECT
THE WRONGS OF YOUR
YOUNGEST SON?

FITTING.



ZIN-CARLA
REQUIRES GREAT
SACRIFICE.

OF COURSE.



YOU
CAN'T!

I AM THE
PATRON OF
THIS HOUSE!



THE CEREMONIAL
DAGGER
SHI'NAYNE.



DEEP WITHIN THE CITY
OF BLINDENSTONE...

WHAT IS
THIS?

The deep gnomes had
not killed him, at least not
yet, and while Drizzt took
solace in that, the hunter
raged.

ITS NAME
IS GUENHWYVAR.
CALL TO THE PANTHER
AND IT WILL COME AS
AN ALLY AND
FRIEND.

KEEP IT SAFE.
FOR IT IS VERY
POWERFUL.

Shackled and without
weapons, the primal beast
thrashed and screamed in the
back of Drizzt's mind,
trying to break free.

HE
SPEAKS
TRUE.

...TO GIVE UP
SUCH A MAGIC
ITEM...

...A
TRICK...

...A
SPY...

...OR A
FOOL...

But this time,
Drizzt was stronger.

BY THE
STONE'S DARK
ELF, WHY ARE
YOU HERE?

BECAUSE...
BECAUSE THERE
WAS NOWHERE
ELSE TO GO.

YOU CAME IN TO US FROM
MENZOBERRAZAN.
YOUR HOME?

IT WAS
NEVER MY
HOME.

BUT, YES, I
LIVED FOR MANY YEARS
IN THE CITY OF THE DROW.
I AM DRIZZT DO'URDEN.
ONCE SECONDBOY OF
HOUSE DO'URDEN.

BY OUR INFORMATION,
HOUSE DO'URDEN
SURVIVES! YOU ARE NO
ROGUE! YOU'RE
A SPY!

I AM A
ROGUE BY
CHOICE. I HAVE
FORSAKEN THE
EVIL WAYS OF MY
PEOPLE.

HE IS NOT
LIKE OTHER DROW. AT
LEAST NONE I HAVE
EVER SEEN.

...AN
ACT...

...HE MUST BE
JUDGED...

...AGREED...

OUR KING
WILL RULE UPON
YOUR FATE, DARK
ELF.
AND THOUGH
I BELIEVE YOU AND
SHALL ASK FOR MERCY,
I SUSPECT YOU WILL
BE EXECUTED.

YES.



WAIT!

A DEEP
GNOME, FROM
YOUR CITY...

YOU KNOW ONE
OF MY PEOPLE, DARK
ELF? NAME HIM.



I DO
NOT KNOW
HIS NAME.

I WAS
A MEMBER
OF A HUNTING
PARTY YEARS AGO.
WE BATTLED A GROUP
OF SVIRFNEBLI THAT
HAD COME INTO
OUR REGION.

ONLY ONE
SURVIVED, I THINK,
AND RETURNED TO
BLINDENSTONE.



WHY DO YOU
TELL ME THIS?
I HAD THOUGHT
YOU DIFFERENT
FROM...

HE LOST
HIS HANDS IN
THE BATTLE! YOU
MUST KNOW
HIM!



BELWAR
DISSENSULP!



HE IS ALIVE
THEN? HE MIGHT
REMEMBER...

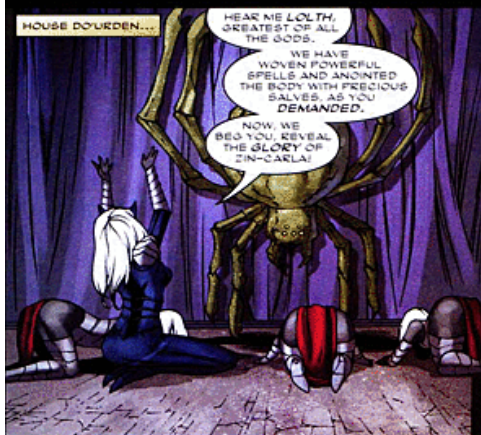
HE WILL
NEVER FORGET
THAT EVIL DAY,
DARK ELF!

NONE OF
US WILL EVER
FORGET.



PLEASE,
GET HIM!

GET BELWAR
DISSENSULP!





AS HANDSOME
AS YOU ALWAYS
WERE IN LIFE.

AND MORE
OBEDIENT, NOW
THAT HE FOLLOWS
YOUR COMMANDS
WITHOUT QUESTION,
MATRON.

WE SHALL
SEE.



RIZZEN HAS BEEN
BY MY SIDE FOR MANY
YEARS, BUT NOW HE
BETRAYS ME.

KILL HIM,
MY PET.

WHAT?
MALICE?



AS GOOD
AS HE WAS
IN LIFE.

BETTER.

GAZE UPON THE
GIFT OF OUR QUEEN.
NOTHING IN ALL THE
UNDERDARK--IN ALL
THE WORLD CAN
STOP HIM!



WE WILL
SET HIM LOSE
IMMEDIATELY...

HE WILL
HUNT DRIZZT
DOWN WITHOUT MERCY,
WITHOUT COMPASSION,
AND HE WILL
DESTROY HIM!

THE FATHER
SHALL KILL THE
SON!





Moving through the winding streets of Blingdenstone, Driest could barely believe what had transpired.

That Belwar would offer his protection—his home—to a drow was generosity beyond imagining.

The sort no resident of Menzoberranzan would ever extend, unless there was money or power to be gained.

But the burrow-warden was not motivated by such selfish concerns. His was an act of kindness.

And knowing that shook Driest, so used to seeing everyone as an enemy, to his very core.

WE'RE HERE, YOU CAN GO.

BUT MOST HONORED BURROW-WARDEN, THE KING HAS ORDERED US TO STAY WITH YOU UNTIL THE TRUTH OF THIS DROW IS REVEALED.

BE GONE!

THIS ONE IS IN MY CARE AND I FEAR HIM NOT AT ALL!



TOO MUCH DO
THEY WORRY ABOUT
MY SAFETY.



HOW LONG
HAVE YOU BEEN
OUT OF YOUR CITY,
DRIZZT?

YOU
KNEW==?

I CAN SEE
THE WILD SPARK
IN YOUR EYES.



YEARS -- TIME HAS
LITTLE MEANING IN THE
OPEN PASSAGES OF THE
UNDERDARK.

TELL ME.
TELL ME ALL
OF IT.

So Drizzt
did just that.

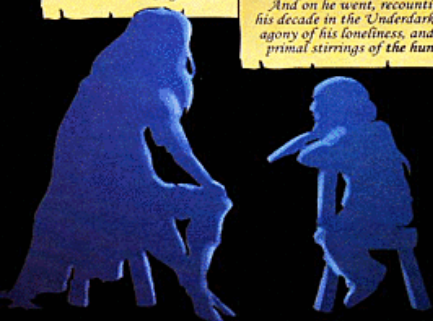
*He spoke of his youth in
Menzoberranzan, the murder
of Zaknafein, and his decision to
forsake his dark kin and their
even darker goddess.*

*And on he went, recounting
his decade in the Underdark, the
agony of his loneliness, and the
primal stirrings of the hunter.*

*Until, at last, he
came to his arrival in
Blingdenstone.*

MAGDA
CANNARA
BOY, BY THE
STONES.

THAT IS
A STORY.



After that first night, the burrow-warden and his charge seldom spoke.

There was no animosity... Belwar was simply a private person. And Drizzt, still learning the swiftness of tongue, did not trust his own words.

Yet though they were silent, the world around them was not.

Blindensstone was a bustling metropolis, and the sounds of life-of civilization... surrounded the dark elf from morning until night; keeping the hunter at bay.

And as the days turned to weeks, Drizzt found himself happy for the first time in what seemed like millennia.

WE'LL ASK THE DROW. WE'LL KNOW!

YOU HAVE LIVED IN THE UNDERDARK. IT IS SAID, TELL THESE TWO THAT CREATURES LIKE THAT ONE ARE REAL.

HAI TOLD YOU!

HOW DO WE KNOW HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH?

I HAVE MET ONE.

BASILISKS? YES, THEY ARE.

REALLY?!

AND YOU ESCAPED BEFORE IT COULD ATTACK?

ESCAPED? NO, I FOUGHT IT.





"YOU ARE SAFE NOW,
THAT I PROMISE."

DR...ZT.

NEXT: HOME